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President: Ms. Mejía Vélez (Vice-President) ..... (Colombia)

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In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system (session II)

1. **The President** said that business as usual was no longer an option. Member States had called for the United Nations development system to work coherently and to institutionalize an effective follow-up and review process. They had also emphasized that the system needed to be ready to efficiently support the implementation of the new universal development agenda. Considerable progress had been made and Member States had begun to map the elements needed to align the response of the United Nations development system to emerging challenges in the development landscape; to the need to leverage both public and private resources, in order to increase funding; and to the need to establish a twenty-first century governance structure that reflected the current membership of the Organization and was capable of delivering on the post-2015 development agenda. The dialogue provided an opportunity to conduct technical, purposeful and inclusive discussions from a system-wide perspective. It was also a critical opportunity to ensure that the system was capable of tackling the challenges that lay ahead and supporting countries in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. The aim was to produce practical, concrete and action-oriented recommendations as the United Nations development system embarked on its fourth phase of reform.

2. **Ms. Clark** (Chair, United Nations Development Group (UNDG); and Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that 2015 was a historic opportunity to shape the future role of the United Nations to ensure that all Member States could contribute effectively to implementing the major global agendas agreed upon. The United Nations development system should be relevant, nimble and able to help countries to deliver on their sustainable development priorities. However, to be fit for purpose in a post-2015 world, the Organization must build on its successes and comparative advantages and overcome remaining institutional and operational obstacles to delivering collaboratively. To that end, the development system was taking a comprehensive look at its objectives, priorities, operations and funding to ensure that it was well positioned to support sustainable development and the achievement of national goals.

3. An integrated approach to addressing poverty and resilience required national Governments to work across ministries and sectors and meant that the United Nations and other development actors needed to be better at combining their efforts and pooling their expertise and resources. Through their experiences in both "Delivering as one" countries and self-starter countries, United Nations country teams had learned a great deal about working together to provide relevant and cost-effective support for countries, and Governments were increasingly recognizing the value of the "Delivering as one" approach as the business model of choice for country teams. The latest quadrennial comprehensive policy review monitoring survey of programme countries conducted by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs had confirmed that the "Delivering as one" approach was reducing duplication of effort and making it easier for countries to work with the United Nations system.

4. UNDG had introduced standard operating procedures for country teams to deliver collaboratively; they had been agreed across all UNDG entities and approved by the Secretary-General as the way of working in the post-2015 world. Their purpose was to ensure that all entities in the United Nations development system worked together to achieve results for the people and countries that they served. The procedures provided essential guidance on how to establish quality United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and implement them, and how to obtain results that could be monitored, evaluated and reported on. The procedures could be adapted to every national and country team context and represented a new way of doing business for all country teams. While UNDG was accelerating implementation of a second generation of the "Delivering as one" approach, it was also drawing on a range of good practices from around the world to ensure that the system was well prepared to deliver on the new development agenda. A new, integrated business operations strategy was being piloted in 13 countries in order to increase efficiency and deliver cost savings in information and communications technology, human resources and other common services. In Malawi, for example, UNDG was working

with the Government to develop an innovative monitoring framework to generate real-time data on the implementation of the UNDAF and enable the United Nations and the Government to identify obstacles to progress and take corrective action. The new UNDG "Delivering Results Together" Fund promoted integrated and coherent policy responses to support achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and advance sustainable development.

5. Efforts were being made not only to improve collaboration at the country level but also to make headquarters better equipped in the post-2015 world, since work at the headquarters level must always be well grounded in the needs of country-level operations. In preparing for the implementation of the post-2015 agenda, UNDG would undertake a series of initiatives in 2015, including piloting the next generation of MDG acceleration frameworks to make progress on lagging MDGs and considering how to improve collaboration between humanitarian and development actors. It would improve its programming and funding instruments, including pooled funding mechanisms, to give better support to countries in early recovery and transition, and would develop a new risk management framework for pooled funding, which would include a system-wide approach to assessing risk and promoting resilience. It would accelerate the mainstreaming of South-South and triangular cooperation across the system through a new coordination mechanism established in collaboration with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation. It would create a new learning and performance management system for a stronger resident coordinator system supported by a system-wide cost-sharing system, bearing in mind that UNDP currently contributed approximately three quarters of the total costs in line with its leadership role in system coordination. It would support countries in ensuring effective, systematic use of national data and developing national statistical capacity to support implementation of the sustainable development goals. Lastly, it would step up efforts to consult with central State authorities, civil society, the private sector and other national actors. All those initiatives would ensure that the United Nations development system was well placed to support implementation of the post-2015 agenda and strengthen its longer-term positioning as a key actor.

6. Looking beyond 2015, UNDG had agreed on a common vision on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system. To support sustainable development around the world the system needed to provide platforms for global discussion and help countries to design and implement practical solutions on the ground. The work of the system should be grounded in cutting-edge analytics and strategies focused on tackling inequalities, eradicating poverty and addressing lack of rights, vulnerabilities and risks. More open and common systems were needed for the production, sharing and use of quality data, knowledge and practices across the United Nations system and with other partners, and results-based teams were needed to collaborate with all relevant stakeholders. Operationalizing that vision would enable United Nations country teams to design programmes with stakeholders, provide platforms for shared capacities and operations and be a lead actor in facilitating national dialogues. It would also enable the performance and results of institutions and individuals to be evaluated thoroughly and transparently. The discussion of the concept of "fit for purpose" should go beyond what was possible through the current architecture, resources, technologies and human capacities of the Organization, and should look to a bolder United Nations which would deliver on its new mandates through broader partnerships.

7. In 2016, against the backdrop of a newly adopted development agenda, the General Assembly would decide on the future strategic direction of the United Nations development system. UNDG had made significant changes in its way of working and was well positioned to deliver on the post-2015 agenda. It would work with Member States to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review and hoped that the review would look at the whole system and strengthen its ability to deliver meaningful, sustained development results in the post-2015 world.

8. **Mr. Carrera Castro** (Guatemala) said that the universal presence of the United Nations development system was a challenge that must be met because the post-2015 development agenda was universal in nature, covering issues that were a responsibility for all countries. As a result, countries should be accountable for that agenda and Member States should carefully study the best way to ensure universal presence. Member States should also give the Secretary-General the power and resources required to appoint United Nations representatives at the country level, rather than

just relying on resident coordinators, because the agenda was a complex one that involved not only traditional economic and social issues but also less traditional environmental issues and, in some countries, even peacebuilding issues.

9. With regard to the operational programme of funds, there should be more accountability to Member States and therefore more frequent meetings of executive boards. Three meetings a year was not enough, bearing in mind that the boards of most agencies met every week. Broader partnerships for development were needed, which would involve changes to the way in which United Nations institutions were governed. Executive boards should accept members of civil society as permanent members given that civil society and the private sector would play a more important role in implementing the post-2015 agenda.

10. **Mr. Khiari** (Tunisia), Vice-President, requested further information on the transition from humanitarian aid to development assistance and how it could be made efficient and cost-effective.

11. **Mr. Shearman** (United Kingdom) said that the Organization clearly had a universal presence and its universal agenda was designed to leave nobody behind, which implied a focus on the poorest, most marginalized and most vulnerable populations. His delegation wondered how it would be possible to combine the universal mandate with a particular emphasis on ensuring that the Organization truly left nobody behind. UNDG, and the United Nations system more broadly, had an important role to play in achieving that goal. In that regard, both the normative and the operational functions of the Organization had to come together in the new agenda, as both were important.

12. **Mr. Dunn** (United States of America) said that trial and error were key elements of the innovation process and, in order to learn, people had to take risks. Unfortunately, the United Nations and the rest of the international development system was risk averse. The Organization needed the space to take risks, try new things and even occasionally to fail. Member States and United Nations institutions should create an environment that promoted new ideas. It was not merely a matter of improving the way in which the United Nations designed and implemented programmes; it was about how the entire system could be shifted to value and reward innovation and experimentation.

13. Partnerships with the private sector, civil society and academia were key drivers for introducing greater innovation, experimentation and creativity for change. In 2000, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization had brought together the public and private sectors to give children in the poorest countries the same access to vaccines that children in rich countries enjoyed. That initiative had saved thousands of lives and its joint financing policy, which required Governments to help pay for the vaccines, ensured that countries would continue to make vaccine supplies available to their citizens. Such initiatives should be implemented more often in the United Nations system. The Organization's professional staff needed to be as creative and innovative as possible in devising better solutions to problems, and innovative ideas from outside the system should also be welcomed.

14. Member States needed to consider how they could deploy the limited public funds available to unlock investments by the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders, in order to ensure that the ambitious goals of the post-2015 agenda attracted the resources that they needed to succeed. Practitioners and development workers in the field should be part of ongoing discussions on monitoring and evaluation. To find out what worked, the Organization should learn from those who had practical experience on the ground. The United Nations must be fit for purpose, but Governments and non-governmental organizations also needed to reflect on whether they were ready to deliver on pledges made, which included being accountable to citizens and allocating enough resources in the right way. After all, everyone had room to improve and everyone should be fit for purpose, since a universal agenda would require change from each and every stakeholder. Quality, transparency, accountability and innovation must become priorities across the United Nations development system, and demonstrating them would be the only credible way for the Organization to show that it was best positioned to deliver development results.

15. **Ms. Fotina** (Russian Federation) said that Member States should continue to base their development work on the decisions reflected in General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and should formally discuss how best to implement that resolution.

"Delivering as one" should be one of the models of United Nations presence that could be adopted by countries voluntarily. Her delegation had consistently emphasized that making "Delivering as one" mandatory might harm the United Nations development system. Given its understanding that standard operating procedures were applicable to all countries and national contexts, it sought clarification about whether they would be used for all countries instead of only those adopting the "Delivering as one" approach.

16. **Mr. Dias Favero** (Brazil) said that the quadrennial comprehensive policy review was important to ensure transparent setting of priorities for the United Nations development system. Nobody could dispute the importance of peace and security and climate change as major objectives for all Member States but there were other equally important issues. While the United Nations development system must be fit for purpose, his delegation wondered who established its purposes. There was a lack of transparency in governance and responsibility to Member States that must be addressed. In particular, there was not enough dialogue between Member States and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and dedicated teams were needed to administer and manage funds, programmes and executive agencies. Developing countries encountered difficulties because three CEB meetings a year were not enough. Member States should be more involved in the task team established by UNDP on the upscaling of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation. His delegation sought further information on that initiative, which was both timely and valuable. In that regard, Member States should play a role in the process, rather than just being informed about its outcome.

17. **Mr. Usui** (Japan) said that renewing and strengthening partnerships globally and within countries would be crucial to successful implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. The United Nations should therefore actively assist Governments in their efforts to coordinate activities involving different stakeholders. In 1999, Japan had established the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, which relied on coordination among multiple organs, as did also the Peacebuilding Fund. Given that the resident coordinator played a crucial role in ensuring integrated coordination, it was encouraging to learn that the resident coordinator function was to be strengthened and supported from headquarters.

18. His delegation was pleased that the "Delivering as one" initiative was on the right track, but stressed the importance of learning lessons and leaving room for flexibility to make improvements. It would welcome information on further developments relating to the standard operating procedures. Lastly, although the post-2015 development agenda should be holistic and comprehensive, it should not be an excuse for the bureaucratic bloating of the United Nations system.

19. **Mr. Lennartsson** (Sweden) said that the transition from the MDGs to sustainable development goals would keep the United Nations development system preoccupied for some time after the adoption of the new agenda. The Organization must be relevant and fit for that great challenge. The new development agenda was much more ambitious, integrated, complex and universal than the one under the MDGs. The traditional service delivery model, — which was project- and programme-oriented and focused on resource transfer — had been dominating the approach adopted by the United Nations in many programme countries, especially the poorest and most fragile, and that approach would remain relevant in most of those countries. However, in a new era of sustainable development goals, the United Nations development system also needed to adopt a different approach. In the emerging economies and middle-income countries, in particular, where the service delivery model seemed less relevant, there was a need for a stronger focus on integration and the provision of global public goods, as well as on normative and standard-setting functions. Such issues should be one of the starting points for the discussion on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system. His delegation wondered what the implications of that transformation in the development landscape would be for the broader United Nations development system.

20. **Mr. Bargawi** (Observer for the European Union) said that his delegation sought more information on the linkages between the country and headquarters levels. It welcomed the progress made with regard to standard operating procedures and delivering as one. Some major issues had to be tackled and discussions should be grounded in evidence from the country level. During the quadrennial comprehensive policy review Member States had heard relentless calls from the country level for headquarters reform so that

headquarters could deliver benefits at the country level. His delegation wondered what the key challenges were in that regard as Member States looked towards the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review in 2016.

21. **Mr. Suazo** (Honduras), noting that the "Delivering as one" initiative was not new and progress had been made in some countries but not in others, said that it would be useful to know where the initiative had failed and what needed to be improved so that lessons learned could be applied throughout the United Nations system. When it came to development, one size did not fit all; some issues were more important in some countries than in others and a differentiated approach was required. Just as nobody should be left behind, it was also important that no issue was left behind. A global agenda should address all issues equally since all were equally important.

22. **Ms. Clark** (Chair, United Nations Development Group (UNDG); and Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that Member States needed to consider what kind of United Nations presence they wanted in the post-2015 world. If they wanted a United Nations official to represent the entire Organization and the full range of mandates in a given country they needed to consider how that would be funded. Under the current arrangement, which worked in practice, the United Nations resident coordinator was normally the UNDP resident representative, who had a development mandate and sometimes, in cases where humanitarian coordinator status was accorded, also a humanitarian mandate. It was not a political mandate at all, which meant that UNDP disproportionately bore the cost and responsibility of that system. It was for Member States to decide whether they wished to continue that practical arrangement or introduce a different approach. The executive boards of the funds and programmes were very helpful and constructive, and they met three times a year in a full assembly meeting. Member States should decide whether there was a case for an expanded bureau to meet on a more regular basis. The World Bank had Boards of Directors that met each week and Member States could consider whether they wished to adopt that configuration. Regarding the need for broader development partnerships, the United Nations would likely continue as a Member State-based organization, while one that also recognized and worked with civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders.

23. Concerning the humanitarian assistance/development interface, it was critical to invest in early recovery. By supporting people to get back on their feet and achieve self-reliance as soon as possible the Organization moved development forward. While it was important not to think in terms of a humanitarian phase and then a development phase, Member States needed to look at how funding was configured because currently humanitarian funding and development funding constituted two separate streams and early recovery was often squeezed out. In some countries pooled funding was being tested and other countries could be helped to take that concept forward.

24. With regard to the universal nature of the new agenda, it was of course important to continue focusing on the poorest to make sure that nobody was left behind. The funds and programmes devoted by far the greatest proportion of their resources to the least developed and most fragile countries, as directed by Member States, and that would remain the case. However, the presence of the United Nations development system in middle-income countries was also vital because those countries had made substantial development progress and had a lot to share; the role of the Organization in that regard meant that it was in a position to support South-South cooperation and exchanges of experience.

25. On innovation, trial and error entailed risks but new ideas were needed and individuals should be entrepreneurial in looking for new opportunities. If risks were taken it must be understood that not everything would always work perfectly and it was important that there was not a blame culture because otherwise people would be afraid to fail. Instead, a collaborative culture was needed to encourage risk taking. The way in which organizations were funded had an impact on their capacity to deliver. The Organization had improved its strategic planning and prioritization but at the same time unearmarked funding had diminished. It was vital that major multilateral organizations did not become mere contracting businesses as that was not what Member States had intended. Such organizations had been set up to strategically support countries in achieving their development objectives but if everything was very tightly earmarked it was difficult for them to play that role.

26. The standard operating procedures could be adapted to any country context based on what worked in that context. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review had consistently called for the United Nations development system to be more connected and to work better together, and the standard operating procedures were designed to give guidance to country teams in that regard. Regarding transparency in priority setting, when UNDG set a strategy it was about how to operationalize what Member States had agreed on; it did not establish fresh agendas outside Member State parameters. UNDG strived to meet the expectations of Member States and the term "fit for purpose" meant being ready to deliver on what Member States had decided.

27. She was ready to provide further information on support for South-South and triangular cooperation. The United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security had made agencies work together because it could not be accessed if they did not collaborate. Pooled mechanisms at the country level also made stakeholders cooperate. The new agenda was far bolder and more transformational than the MDGs and it was true that the traditional service delivery model might not always be appropriate. However, needs varied considerably across developing countries and for some countries that delivery model remained very relevant, while other countries might look to the Organization for policy ideas and innovation. The United Nations must be flexible enough to meet the diverse range of requirements.

28. It was very easy to blame headquarters when things were not working at the country level. Although problems had certainly been identified and would be rectified, the headquarters level was not always to blame. The United Nations development system incorporated a wide range of entities, including specialized agencies which had their own governing bodies. As a result, in order to make progress, UNDG had to work through partnership, collaboration and consensus. The "Delivering as one" initiative had shown that better results could be achieved by working together. It was inevitable that when such an initiative was launched in an organization like the United Nations it would be process-heavy. Member States needed to build a culture of collaboration that transcended traditional silos. One size would never fit all and the way the Organization worked had to be adaptable and flexible in order to meet country needs, including both their own development goals and priorities and the global agenda that countries had agreed upon.

Panel discussion: "Longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system taking into account the post-2015 development agenda: country-level perspectives"

29. **Ms. Franceschi Navarro** (Panama), panellist, said that the universal, multidimensional and intersectoral nature of the post-2015 development agenda would oblige Member States to review their economic, social and environmental strategies and programmes at the national and local levels and to devise innovative and transparent strategic partnerships and financial models. The United Nations development system would also have to seek out new forms of collaboration in addition to modifying its operations, programmes and structure at both the headquarters and country levels. While Governments were ultimately responsible for the development of their countries, the Organization had a clear mandate to provide support and should be able to advise on public policy and operating standards that could be applied flexibly in different national contexts, serve as a platform for discussing and designing sustainable solutions and provide accurate analysis and best practices for reaching those for whom a dignified and decent existence still seemed unattainable.

30. Panama was an upper-middle-income country on the road to becoming a citizens' democracy with an impressive macroeconomic performance. Structural inequalities still existed, particularly with regard to the distribution of wealth and opportunities, but her Government was committed to promoting people-centred development. One comparative advantage for Panama was that the country offices and regional offices of several United Nations agencies were based in a single location. Nevertheless, problems such as a lack of interaction and synergy between agencies, competition for funding and high transaction costs highlighted the need to take country-level action to legitimize the mandate of the United Nations and ensure its long-term positioning.

31. A shared vision with common objectives at the global, regional and national levels, and even the local level, was essential to efficiently and effectively achieving the desired impact and change. A common vision would also lead to more coherent messages and

communication, which would improve dialogue with Governments and other partners. Additionally, strong leadership, vision, motivation and commitment were required both from the leaders of Member States and within the United Nations system. It might be worth considering the idea of expanding the leadership responsibilities of the resident coordinator at the supra-agency level, given the importance of the resident coordinator function in strategic positioning, creation of a suitable working environment and provision of support for States' development objectives. National teams should also be strengthened to enable them to participate in the creation of their country's development framework. To ensure efficient use of the resources available for fulfilling commitments made under the post-2015 development agenda, a country-level system based on the principle of "Delivering as one" should be revitalized and fine-tuned in accordance with the specific needs of each country. That was particularly important given that resources were likely to decrease and leave States facing operational challenges.

32. Lastly, it was important for country offices to dare to innovate and implement new models of cooperation involving non-traditional partners, for example from the academic, private and youth sectors. In that regard, the Permanent Mission of Panama to the United Nations in New York had begun to coordinate its efforts with the country office in Panama. Country offices should increasingly position themselves as hinges between global and national efforts, providing flexible support targeted at the State's specific needs.

33. **Mr. Tara** (Chief Director, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Ghana), panellist, said that the United Nations strategy for assisting countries transitioning to middle-income status must be based on the Organization's proven and perceived strengths. Its global development policy and governance structure should be guided by its greatest strength: its widely accepted neutrality. That strength would enable it to play a key role as an arbiter in a development landscape littered with the vested interests of States and organizations. The neutrality of the United Nations must also be used to make the process of developing the post-2015 agenda more consultative and accommodating of diverse contexts.

34. Specifically, the United Nations should consider becoming a non-competing development partner in the long term by ceasing to deliver employment skills training, farming inputs, sanitation services and other country-level services. Agencies such as the World Health Organization and UNDP had been very effective in Ghana in the past but were now in competition with development actors better able to provide services. Such competition reduced efficiency and at times led to duplication of efforts. The fact that there was limited funding available to United Nations agencies at the country level should also be taken into account. It would therefore be best to have those services delivered by specialized multilateral, bilateral, private sector or non-governmental partners, under the supervision of the United Nations. The long-term objective of the United Nations development system should be to enhance its capacity to mobilize and deliver resources through other bodies. Paradoxically, while more States were set to become middle-income countries in the future, levels of inequality and marginalization were also projected to be unacceptably high. Middle-income countries were increasingly being directed to the market for development resources, but very few Governments would voluntarily use commercial funds for social development. Vigorous resource mobilization by the United Nations development system, in partnership with Governments, was therefore crucial.

35. Another future role of the United Nations could be as an even stronger, non-competitive partner for national Governments in the delivery of the globally agreed agenda at the country level, acting as a neutral arbiter to keep competing partners in check. The principle of country ownership had been much discussed, but some countries might not be able to exercise and demand ownership alone. More crucially, the United Nations development system should continue striving to provide effective aid and development. His country supported the principle of "Delivering as one" at the country level.

36. **Mr. Gedamu** (Director, United Nations Agencies and Regional Economic Cooperation Directorate, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Ethiopia), panellist, said that there were several major areas in which the United Nations could play a critical role in Ethiopia. It could continue supporting Government efforts to eradicate poverty. It could also help improve productive capacity by supporting development of the agricultural and industrial sectors. Inclusive and sustainable industrialization led by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization,

with a focus on medium, small and micro enterprises, was at the centre of that process. The United Nations could continue to play its current role in humanitarian and disaster risk management, supporting Government efforts to focus on the continuum between development and humanitarian activities. Lastly, it could continue to support good governance and capacity-building, which were essential to maintaining the gains resulting from economic growth.

37. However, there were challenges that needed to be addressed if the United Nations was to have a transformative impact in Ethiopia. The efficiency of country-level governance was not improving, despite the implementation of the "Delivering as One" initiative. Improved thematic coordination between United Nations agencies was needed in order to support transformative and sustainable development. Another challenge was that most of the United Nations development system's funding came from non-core resources, which were unpredictable and provided under rigid conditions and on a short-term basis. To eliminate fragmentation, partners should be able to specify only the general sector they wished to support (the health sector, for example), not specific subsectors or regions within countries. The shortage of funding for specialized agencies must be addressed by considering how to link those agencies with others that did receive resources.

38. **Ms. Karybaeva** (Head, Department of Ethnic and Religious Policies and Interaction with Civil Society, Office of the President of Kyrgyzstan), panellist, said that the main challenge in considering the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system was to look at global processes in the post-2015 period from the country perspective and the perspective of diverse regions, including post-Soviet Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan had experienced authoritarian rule and inter-ethnic strife since gaining independence, but it had now managed to achieve stability and economic growth, officially becoming a middle-income country in 2014. It upheld human rights and the rights of vulnerable groups, and attached great importance to cooperation with the United Nations in terms of achieving the MDGs and the sustainable development goals. For the period 2012-2017, the UNDAF for Kyrgyzstan was focused on the priorities of the national sustainable development strategy, in implementation of which her Government had adopted a number of programmes on such issues as inter-ethnic relations and government policy in the religious sphere. It was important for national programmes to be accompanied by clear action plans and specific funding from the State budget, as well as United Nations resources. A total of 21 United Nations agencies had offices in Kyrgyzstan and the Organization also played a leading role in coordinating the work of other international organizations. A level of trust had eventually been established, after a somewhat difficult process, and mechanisms for joint cooperation had been put in place. The rapid needs assessment and timely provision of humanitarian and development assistance following the violence of 2010 was proof of the effectiveness of those mechanisms.

39. Her country's experience of working with the United Nations to achieve the MDGs had demonstrated the importance of monitoring. An effective monitoring system had put the MDGs at the heart of the Government's agenda and resulted in most of the objectives being achieved. However, it was important to remember that formal achievement of goals did not mean that the work had been completed, as further qualitative change was required in some areas. For example, post-Soviet countries generally had good indicator scores in the area of education, but that should not distract Governments from the need to improve the quality and accessibility of education. Furthermore, economic instability linked to the global economy meant that progress was fragile in almost all States.

40. Implementation of the sustainable development goals should focus on national priorities. Her Government's priority areas for cooperation with the United Nations included improving health care, education, the environment, food security, employment rates and State governance, which was particularly important in countries that had experienced political instability. The agenda should also be inclusive and take cultural specificities and traditions into account. Moreover, traditional forms of cooperation with the United Nations should be re-examined and the role of civil society should be reviewed in order to take into account new forms of civil activism, such as had emerged in Kyrgyzstan in recent years.

41. **Mr. Hoxha** (Albania), discussant, said that the diversity of middle-income countries in terms of geographical area, political systems, development indices and human rights approaches made it difficult to speak of them as a group. Nevertheless, they all needed United Nations support in designing and

implementing effective social policies, strengthening institutional capacities, expanding social protection systems and increasing social cohesion. National capacity-building was a central element of that support.

42. One of the weak points of the United Nations development system was its fragmentation. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review had discussed that issue, but the Organization must make integrated approaches and inter-agency cooperation the norm rather than simply a target. It would be important to see how the "Delivering as one" approach and the standard operating procedures for United Nations country teams translated into practice and how that would affect the current silo mentality and sector-defined structure of the Organization. The enthusiasm of country teams for such an approach should be matched at the headquarters level. There should also be strong cooperation with local partners, Governments and civil society to ensure that United Nations assistance was fully aligned with the needs and priorities of each country. That issue was of particular importance in the context of moving from assistance towards cost sharing with Governments, as better cooperation increased the level of mutual accountability. The United Nations was the organization best placed to become a central player in forging partnerships and helping States strengthen subregional and intraregional cooperation, particularly South-South cooperation.

43. In return for that assistance, there would be certain expectations of States. First, they must ensure that they had stable and functioning Governments that were collecting taxes efficiently and taking action against illicit activities, capital flight and corruption through strong political will, transparency, regulation and accountability. Second, Governments must ensure the participation of non-governmental actors in achieving their goals. Third, since the United Nations was expected to deliver as one, States should do likewise by strengthening their internal coordination mechanisms. Fourth, Governments should establish learning mechanisms, particularly peer reviews.

44. Issues particularly relevant to middle-income countries included economic transformation, closing the technology gap, financing for development and balancing the fight against climate change with rapid economic growth. In order to be relevant, the United Nations system must, above all, ensure horizontal cooperation and accountability, which were currently lacking. The United Nations development system must reinvent itself and concentrate its activities on areas where it was not in competition with other actors.

45. **Ms. Mesquita Borges** (Observer for Timor-Leste), discussant, said that the comments made by the representative of Albania were also true for countries such as hers that were in transition from relief to development, the only difference being that they did not necessarily possess the strong institutions that were a prerequisite to any coordination, implementation and delivery activities.

46. Transition was not a linear process but rather involved simultaneously tackling problems, keeping the peace, bringing about reconciliation, building institutions, generating economic growth and creating employment. Governments therefore had to be able to react quickly and deliver, and the United Nations must do likewise in the post-2015 development context. However, the required nimbleness could not be achieved by taking a silo approach. Some of the required flexibility should also come from Member States. Her country and others emerging from conflict would not meet any of the MDGs by 2015. The agenda of leaving no one behind was therefore critical and must take into account the very different contexts of Member States.

47. Over the past five years, institution-building had saved Timor-Leste from regressing into instability and violence. Considerable progress had been made as a result of her Government having worked closely with partners to bring about a shift in the way they approached business and having required them to align their activities with the national strategic development plan. For example, the United Nations had been required to improve execution in order to quickly improve the lives of ordinary people through increased access to food and education, rather than focusing only on capacity-building and technical advice. The United Nations must be able to take risks, such as providing direct budgetary support, albeit on the basis of mutual accountability. It also needed to increase its presence in rural areas and work with the Timorese Government to promote the economic empowerment of women, who constituted the majority of the population in small villages. The relatively high political representation of women in Timor-Leste did not necessarily translate into the adoption of better policies by its Parliament.

48. Strong institutions were necessary in order for a State to make the most of the linkages between good

governance, peace and growth; develop national ownership and leadership; and benefit from its natural and financial resources. Timor-Leste had significant resources but continued to rely heavily on international technical advice in some areas. It needed to work closely with the United Nations system and partners on the ground in order to continue to build capacity.

49. **Ms. Nguyen** Phuong Nga (Observer for Viet Nam), discussant, said that the United Nations development system had played a crucial role in supporting developing countries in recent decades, particularly with regard to implementation of the MDGs. There should be increased interactive discussion in informal settings on how to make the system more fit for the post-2015 development agenda.

50. The "Delivering as one" model had brought greater focus and coherence to United Nations assistance in Viet Nam. The One Plan, designed by the country team and Government agencies with input from donors and other stakeholders, reflected national specificities and development priorities as well as the comparative advantages of the United Nations agencies. It also outlined the potential areas of cooperation that were most in line with the country's needs, in order to enable the United Nations to better focus its resources. That strategic focus and policy advocacy had been instrumental in restructuring the economy. Prior to the adoption of the "Delivering as one" approach, the seven United Nations agencies active in her country had been implementing separate projects in the same sectors and there had been frequent complaints that it was difficult to work with them owing to their different programme cycles and procedures. The problem had been resolved through the introduction of standard operating procedures, which should be applied across all United Nations funds, programmes and development entities.

51. As a "Delivering as one" pilot country, Viet Nam had also experienced the benefits of pooled funding, which helped Governments and the United Nations to achieve more coherent programming, more predictable funding for programme activities, reduced fragmentation and reduced competition between United Nations agencies. However, it was important to remember that pooled funding was effective only when donors provided sufficient unearmarked funding and the United Nations and the Government developed clear fund allocation criteria.

52. The clear comparative advantages of the United Nations, including its strong normative and advocacy efforts, its ability to forge issue-based partnerships and its global presence, should be built on in the post-2015 development agenda. However, the focus should be dictated by the needs of different types of countries. The United Nations development system could deliver actual services in low-income countries and in States where few non-governmental organizations were active, whereas in middle-income countries the focus should be on policy advocacy, capacity-building for national institutions, human resources and the transfer of technology and knowledge. Multi-stakeholder partnerships could serve as a vehicle for resolving issues that Governments could not tackle on their own, but such partnerships could not replace the intergovernmentally-agreed global partnership for development. Ultimately, the success of the post-2015 development agenda in any country would require effective tripartite partnerships between the United Nations, Governments and donors; strong Government ownership and leadership; coherent work from the United Nations agencies; and support from donors.

53. **Mr. Mminele** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should provide papers and quality analysis concerning the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system and that background papers should be prepared on each of the six elements of the dialogue as well as on their interlinkages. The dialogue should take place over a full day to allow for in-depth discussions on the topic, particularly in relation to funds and programmes. The focus should be on achieving greater understanding among Member States on necessary changes in the areas of organizational governance, representation and the working methods of governing bodies. Member States must be given the opportunity to express their views, with staff of United Nations entities participating in the dialogue primarily as a complementary resource and only upon request. The format of the dialogue should also provide sufficient opportunities for informal discussion between Member States and independent experts on as many as possible of the issues referred to in Council resolution 2014/14 and General Assembly resolution 69/238. The Group proposed that a clear road map for follow-up on the dialogue should be provided, in order to ensure that it had the desired impact. One session should be dedicated to each element of the dialogue.

54. It was now widely recognized that a post-2015 development agenda would place new demands on the capacity of the Council to further promote policy cooperation among Member States and to coordinate the work of the United Nations development system. Although the quadrennial comprehensive policy review had specifically called for poverty eradication to be the underlying objective of United Nations development programmes and projects, Member States did not yet have a common view of all dimensions of poverty. It would be important to reach a common understanding that could be applied across the entire development system ahead of discussions in the context of the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review in 2016.

55. The role of United Nations operational activities for development should be strengthened, as should the Organization's capacity to assist developing countries in achieving their development goals. That would require greater effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact as well as a significant increase in resources. The fact that the dialogue had so far been a one-way discourse was a matter of concern; it was important that the discussion should take the needs and concerns of Member States into account. Strengthening the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation across the system was a particular priority for the Group.

56. The concept of norm-setting should be clarified, as the Group's understanding was that setting norms should be left to Member States, with the United Nations system merely providing input.

57. **Ms. Perceval** (Argentina) said that it was now a strategically important time for translating ideas and ideals into a concrete agenda and an efficient and coherent action plan to meet the goals of the post-2015 agenda. That agenda would challenge the capacity of the United Nations development system, meaning that business as usual was not an option. The post-2015 development agenda would benefit from other intergovernmental processes in progress, such as the third International Conference on Financing for Development. However, core funding for the work of the United Nations system remained stagnant while non-core funding for development-related activities had increased exponentially, from 51 per cent in 1998 to 69 per cent in 2013. Because of earmarking by donors, non-core resources were not always used in accordance with the mandates, guidelines and goals established by the United Nations system on the basis of local development agendas. Core funding was thus clearly preferable, as it promoted neutrality, national ownership and the alignment of the United Nations development system with national priorities. It was unfortunate that the numerous calls for the funding imbalance to be addressed had not produced the desired effect.

58. One of the development system's most important functions would be to support policymaking based on statistical evidence, analysis and reports on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. With regard to monitoring, her Government favoured a voluntary system of periodic country-level reports, as had been used successfully with the MDGs. Sustainable development would not be furthered by an agenda focused on certain countries "auditing" others or a system of rewards and punishments based on progress towards a single development model, but rather depended on cooperation, solidarity, and respect for diversity and the route to development chosen by each country. Results-based management and accountability were very important, but donor countries must not be allowed to direct financing decisions in order to achieve greater political visibility and short-term results.

59. With regard to the implications that the transition to a universal and integrated development agenda would have for the governance of United Nations development activities, the composition and operation of the governing bodies of the United Nations funds and programmes should be reviewed and the question of achieving equitable representation in terms of gender and geographical location should be addressed.

60. **Mr. Seksenbay** (Kazakhstan) said that middle-income countries such as Kazakhstan could play a transformative role in achieving the sustainable development goals. By implementing United Nations ideas, processes, conventions and treaties, his Government had developed a national plan for people-centred development that would directly contribute to the consolidation of the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system at the national and regional levels. His Government was promoting favourable terms of trade and targeted official development assistance. It was also embracing innovative technologies and practices to promote sustainable development in Central Asia and was implementing forward-looking initiatives, such as the Green Bridge Partnership Programme, that could serve

as models for other countries in achieving sustainable development goals on climate change, sustainable energy and agriculture. His Government had offered to host a regional civil service hub and a regional hub for development, humanitarian assistance and resilience-building to strengthen United Nations field activities in the region. It was also forming an aid agency to support Central Asian States, while the United Nations country team was developing a new partnership framework for 2016-2020 to replace the existing UNDAF.

61. **Mr. Stokes** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada, said that it was vital to understand the perspective of all Member States, especially the programme countries, as well as the United Nations country teams, which were crucial to implementation, in order to assess gaps and bottlenecks in operational reform. The core functions of the United Nations should include supporting countries to meet international commitments and to shape and implement national sustainable development action plans and strategies for sustainable development financing. Differentiated programmatic approaches should be adopted for least developed countries, small island developing States, fragile States and middle-income countries, since each faced unique challenges. The presence of the United Nations should then be adjusted to better respond to specific priorities, funding needs and contexts. The performance of country operations must be improved and the Organization needed to move towards a genuine "One United Nations", which meant integration of operations instead of convergence. The Organization should provide evidence-based policy advice which was solidly grounded in country realities and underpinned by professional data collection, statistical capacity and knowledge. It should also contribute to the democratization and professionalization of national dialogues with a focus on participatory, inclusive approaches and real partnerships with all development stakeholders.

62. The United Nations should be selective in the support that it provided based on its comparative advantages. It must be an Organization for all Member States but it could not be all things for all Member States. It needed to focus on its core areas of expertise and its strengths. It should also play a role in bridging the gaps between humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and resilience activities. Member States needed to focus on strengthening institutions, which was a key area of involvement for the United Nations going forward. Although Member States should rightfully look towards the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review, they should also ensure that sufficient focus was placed on implementation of the 2012 review, since that remained an unfinished agenda in such areas as the harmonization of business practices and the strengthening of partnerships. Reforms could not be defined if the current quadrennial comprehensive policy review was not complete. Numerous issues relating to governance reforms remained pending and those would be considered in the 2016 review. Member States should consider whether the current governance arrangements suited the needs and interests of all Member States, and should ensure that those arrangements helped funds, programmes and agencies to strengthen their ability to deliver results, work coherently, remain flexible and deliver as one. Governance reforms should be grounded in country and regional experiences and should not constitute rushed decisions that had heavy transaction costs and entailed risks including dispersion and partial implementation.

63. His delegation welcomed the growing consensus with UNDG and the ongoing restructuring efforts relating to norms and standards and operational work which sought to realign areas of United Nations engagement on the basis of key functions and in line with the new post-2015 agenda. Reports containing evidence-based information on progress and gaps were important in guiding discussions on the repositioning of the development system. It was encouraging that most programme countries had recognized the United Nations system as a preferred partner in many areas of sustainable development and had pointed to the need for differentiated programmatic approaches and diversified funding sources.

64. **Ms. Wang** Hongbo (China) said that her delegation would welcome further information in future dialogues on how the development system performed and contributed both in "Delivering as one" and other settings, as well as on how the implementation of standard operating procedures and other initiatives were helping individual members of the system to be more efficient and better coordinated.

65. Country leadership and ownership was important and the development system should be fit for the purposes established by Member States and based on their specific needs. The success or failure of the longer-term positioning of the system would not be determined purely by those deliberations but also by

the impact of the system and its contribution to improving the lives of millions of people around the world. There was no one-size-fits-all approach when it came to cooperation models and the functioning of the development system. It was important that the dialogue and the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review resulted in a development system that was coordinated, coherent and flexible so that it could meet the differentiated needs of programme countries.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.